

LAURA EDWARDS,  
Plaintiff,  
v.  
SOUTHCREST. L.L.C.,  
Defendant.

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Case No. 11-CV-017-CVE-TLW

Before the Court is Defendant Southcrest, L.L.C.'s ("Southcrest") Unopposed Application to Permit its Representative to Appear at Settlement Conference Via Telephone. [Dkt. No. 28]. The Settlement Conference at issue is scheduled for Oct. 18, 2011, before an Adjunct Settlement Judge.

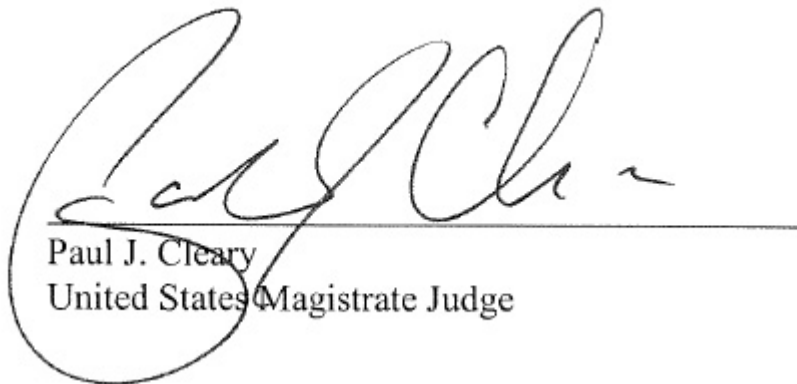
The Court has considered Defendant's request and **DENIES** the Application.

It is fundamental to the mediation process that parties with settlement authority meet face-to-face to attempt to resolve their dispute. Experience has established that settlement conferences are more often successful when the parties physically meet and deal with each other. Thus, the Court's Settlement Conference Order requires the attendance of all parties and counsel, noting that having a client with settlement authority available by telephone "is generally not an acceptable alternative." [Dkt. No. 19, ¶I(B)].

In extraordinary circumstances, the Court has granted relief from this requirement of physical attendance at the settlement conference; however, there is nothing about Defendant's Application that suggests this is an extraordinary case. The Settlement Conference is still 5½ months away. Perhaps Peters' litigation schedule will ease by then. If that clearly will not happen, rescheduling the conference for a more appropriate date would be an obvious alternative.

For these reasons, the Defendant's Unopposed Application is **DENIED**.

**IT IS SO ORDERED** this 3rd day of May 2011.



Paul J. Cleary  
United States Magistrate Judge